

Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

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R 131428Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5202

INFO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 9479

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, EG

SUBJECT: NEW HEAD OF EGYPTIAN RELATIONS OFFICE IN LIBYA, AMBASSADOR
MAHMUD MUHAMMAD TUHAMI

REF: CAIRO 9188

1. THE NEW HEAD OF EGYPTIAN RELATIONS OFFICE (I.E. , AMBASSADOR)
IS AN EXPERIENCED DIPLOMAT WITH SUBSTANTIAL PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE
IN REGION: FIRST EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR TO MAURITANIA (1965-70), THEN
AMBASSADOR TO TUNISIA (1970-75). HE WAS FIRST APOINTEE TO LATTER
POST FOLLOWING RESUMPTION OF TUNISIAN-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS. ALSO
SERVED AS COUNSELOR TO HOLY SEE, 1963-65. TUHAMI CAME TO FOREIGN
MINISTRY FROM ARMY AND SERVED AS MILATT IN MOSCOW.

2. FOR PAST TWO YEARS, TUHAMI HAS BEEN DIRECTOR OF NORTH AMERICAN
AFFAIRS DEPT AT MFA. ALTHOUGH UNDERUTILIZED IN THAT POSITION
BECAUSE US-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS RECEIVE PERSONAL ATTENTION OF HIGHEST
LEVELS OF MFA AND NOT RPT NOT A CONFIDANTE OF FAHMY, HE IS WELL
THOUGHT OF BY THE FONMIN. TUHAMI BELIEVES HIS ASSIGNMENT TO
SENSITIVE POSITION AT TIME OF UNUSUAL LIBYAN-EGYPTIAN TENSION IS
REFLECTION OF FONMIN'S FAITH IN HIS ABILITIES. MAYBE, BUT THERE
IS NOT RPT NOT MUCH DIALOGUE BETWEEN EGYPT AND LIBYA AT PRESENT
TIME AND POSITION PROMISES TO BE A DIFFICULT AND FRUSTRATING ONE.
SADAT PERSONALLY CHOSE TUHAMI'S NAME FROM SEVERAL CANDIDATES
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SUGGESTED BY MFA.

3. FUHAMI, WHO HAS VISITED LIBYA PREVIOUSLY, IS NO ADMIRER OF QADHAFI'S BUT HIS VIEWS ON LIBYA ARE BALANCED AND UNEMOTIONAL. (ON THE SOVIETS, WHOSE FOREIGN POLICY GOALS AND METHODS HE DETESTS, TUHAMI CAN BECOME EMOTIONAL.) HE CLEARLY DISAPPOINTED TO BE SPENDING HIS LAST TOUR BEFORE RETIREMENT IN TRIPOLI, BUT MAY BE EXPECTED TO DO HIS BEST TO ENSURE HIS MISSION IS IN FAVORABLE CONTRAST TO WILD AND WOOLY REPUTATION GAINED BY LIBYAN AMB RECENTLY PNGED FROM CAIRO.

4. EMBASSY LOSING GOOD FRIEND WITH TUHAMI'S DEPARTURE. HE HAS BEEN AS HELPFUL PROFESSIONALLY AS POSSIBLE AND INVARIABLY PLEASSANT TO DEAL WITH. QUIET AND GENTLE OF DEMEANOR, HE IS NEVERTHELESS EXCELLENT COMPANY, FACT WHICH SHOULD BE APPRECIATED IN TRIPOLI. HE IS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE, A CHARMING LADY, FLUENT IN ENGLISH.

5. WE UNDERSTAND THERE IS NO FORMAL AGREEMENT PROCESS BETWEEN CAIRO AND TRIPOLI, SO EMBASSY TRIPOLI CAN EXPECT TO SEE TUHAMI IN AUGUST.
EILTS

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